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702.22 Seminar in Applied Theory & Research I Dr. O’Connor-Petruso

How important is the literature review (and differentiating between various types of journals) and assessing prior research, theorists, and current instructional strategies?

As students it is important to be able to recognize and attribute appropriate value to the different types of articles available to us. Some journals, as we have recently learned, are trade journals. Their agenda is to extend the marketing reach of the advertisers found within their pages. While the articles may be interesting and of value to the reader by way of offering sound advice or information, they are likely not judged by experts in that field. There value is limited in that the article may or may have been based on proper research methods and may only express an opinion or guess on the part of the writer. The article may not utilize previously researched work, lack citations, and fail to be reviewed by other experts in the field. In and of itself, that is not a bad thing; but, the article may lack credibility and the reader may wonder if the information is reliable and valid.

Other types of journals however, for example peer reviewed and/or blind referred scholarly journals, limit or prohibit advertising. This allows the publisher to maintain autonomy and avoid any conflict of interest. Articles in these types of magazines offer the reader expert or expert-assessed information and data that can be relied upon as being built on a sound knowledge base. These provide a source of direct, reliable information or provide the reader a well-respected hypothesis. The writers of these articles are grounded in their professions and the articles written as a result of their research. They can be used by other researchers, teachers and students to enhance and advance the thinking of that particular branch of knowledge.

By reading the work of other researchers and theorists, the student is given an opportunity to absorb and assimilate theories and previous research by experts and either put those theories to work or continue to study, question and test the work of those who have come before us.

It is important that one assess the articles, via literate reviews, to ensure that the journals used provide the most accurate, well-researched and reliable information. It is also important that the proper citations be used, not only to acknowledge the work of the authors—which of course is important--but also to ensure that future students and researchers can find the same information, know that it is a legitimate quote and available for their own work as a bona fide source.

In accessing expert articles, there is exposure to new ideas and procedures that, hopefully, can be utilized to further our knowledge base and improve our instructional strategies. If the experts in a field have discovered that students learn better when teachers do something specific, it makes sense then, as educators, to assimilate that into our daily practice.